

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05
FEAE-00 DODE-00 ERDA-05 SS-15 SP-02 AID-05 EPA-01
CEQ-01 IGA-02 H-01 /109 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7234
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11722

FOR USIAEA VIENNA

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, EAID, EG, GW

SUBJ: FRG/GOE TALKS ON QATTARA DEPRESSION

REF (A) CAIRO 7003, NOTAL, (B) BONN 7612 (NOTAL),

1. FRG AMB STELTZER, WHO PARTICIPATED IN JOINT FRG/GOE COMM-
MISSION MEETING, ADVISES THAT EGYPTIANS WERE TOLD AT MEET-
ING THAT FRG HAS DECIDED DROP QATTARA DEPRESSION FEASIBILITY
STUDY EVEN THOUGH STUDY NOT YET COMPLETED. DECISION MADE
JOINTLY BY FRG MINECONOMICS AND KREDITANSTALT FUR WIED-
ERAUFBAU. REASON GIVEN IS THAT NUCLEAR EXCAVATION NOT LIKELY
TO BE PRACTICAL AND CONVENTIAL EXCAVATION ASSUMED TO BE
UNECONOMIC. DECISION WAS OPPOSED BY QATTARA PROJECT COMMITTEE
OF EXPERTS, WHO ARGUE THAT FEASIBILITY STUDY SHOULD AT
LEAST BE COMPLETED. STELTZER ALSO OPPOSES DECISION, BELIEV-
ING THAT FOR POLITICAL REASONS FRG SHOULD AT LEAST FULFILL
ITS COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE STUDY, ESPECIALLY SINCE GOE--
INCLUDING SADAT--ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PROJECT.

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ACCORDING TO STELTZER, FRG HAS SPENT APPROX DM 11.3 MILLION
ON PROJECT. ANOTHER DM 7 MILLION IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE IT.

2. EGYPTIANS WERE VERY DISTURBED ABOUT FRG DECISION. IMM-
EDIATELY AFTER STELTZER'S RETURN LAST WEEK, DEPPRIMIN AHMED
SULTAN SUMMONED HIM TO DISCUSS MATTER. SULTAN HAD BEEN
"VERY ANGRY" ABOUT THE DECISION. PRIMIN MAMDUH SALEM HAD

SUBSEQUENTLY SUMMONED STELTZER TO URGE THAT FRG RECONSIDER AND AT LEAST COMPLETE FEASIBILITY STUDY. SALEM REITERATED HIGH PRIORITY GOE ATTACHES TO THE PROJECT. IT WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE FUNDS TAKEN FROM OTHER FRG PROJECTS IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE STUDY. SALEM MENTIONED IN PARTICULAR THAT IF FRG NOW DROPS STUDY, THIS WILL MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO GET NEEDED CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR THE PROJECT, THUS PREJUDGING CONCLUSIONS.

3. STELTZER HAS GONE BACK TO HIS GOVT TO URGE RECONSIDERATION OF THE DECISION SO THAT THE FEASIBILITY STUDY MAY AT LEAST BE COMPLETED. REGARDLESS OF FINDINGS, STELTZER BELIEVES FRG SHOULD HONOR ITS COMMITMENT IN THIS INSTANCE. FAILURE TO DO SO, HE FEARS, WILL CAUSE UNNECESSARY POLITICAL FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVTS.

4. ALONG SAME LINES, ON JULY 12 FRG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EMBOFF TOLD EC COUNSELOR THAT FRG HAD JUST ABOUT DECIDED IT WILL HAVE TO GO AHEAD WITH COMPLETION OF FEASIBILITY STUDY BECAUSE OF GOE PRESSURE. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT, WHEREAS PREVIOUSLY CREDITS HAD BEEN UNTIED, NEW TRANCHE, IF APPROVED, WILL BE TIED TO AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT FRG PROCUREMENT. EGYPTIANS, HE REPORTED, WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT FINAL STAGES OF FEASIBILITY STUDY INVOLVE TEST BORINGS ALONG POSSIBLE CANAL ROUTE AND THAT AMERICAN AS WELL AS OTHER INTERNATIONAL FIRMS ARE IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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TERESTED.

5. IN CONTRAST TO ABOVE, MAHER ABAZA, U/SEC MINELECTRICITY, TOLD EMBOFFS FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM RECENT VISIT TO SWEDEN THAT PURPOSE OF VISIT HAD BEEN TO DISCUSS "SWEDISH OPTION" FOR QATTARA PROJECT. (ABAZA IS REFERRING TO USE OF TUNNELS RATHER THAN NUCLEAR EXCAVATED CANALS FOR TRANSPORTING MEDITERRANEAN WATER TO QATTARA DEPRESSION, A METHOD PROPOSED BY SWEDISH SCIENTISTS.) ABAZA SAID GOE NOW REALIZES THAT PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES MAY NOT BE REAL OPTION. IN VIEW IMPORTANCE GOE ATTACHES TO PROJECT, ALTERNATE MEANS MUST BE SERIOUSLY EXPLORED.

6. COMMENT: ABAZA'S REPORTS OF SWEDISH VISIT POSSIBLY REFLECT ATTEMPT TO TURN TO SWEDEN FOR ASSISTANCE IN VIEW FRG'S RELUCTANCE. REACTION HE RECEIVED IN STOCKHOLM MAY HAVE PROMPTED STRONG APPROACH TO FRG TO RECONSIDER MATTER. GOE'S ENTHUSIASM FOR QATTARA DEPRESSION PROJECT REMAINS UNDIMINSHES. ABAZA SPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME WITH REP ABNER MIKVA (CODEL HAMILTON) EXPLAINING IMPORTANCE AND PRIORITY OF QATTARA IN GOE DEVELOPMENT PLANS. ABAZA CONTINUES TO DESCRIBE PROJECT AS ONE TO WHICH GOE ATTACHES HIGHEST PRIORITY, A VIEW EVIDENTLY SHARED

BY PM.
EILTS

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